

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8535
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 6313

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA, SG
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: POSSIBLE SENEGALESE MISSION

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 1000, (B) DAKAR 3679

1. WE SHARE CAPETOWN'S FAVORABLE ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE
SENEGALESE INITIATIVE IN NAMIBIA. WHEREAS NIGERIANS MIGHT AT
FIRST RAISE THEIR ARROGANT EYEBROWS AT ANOTHER NON-FRONTLINER'S
ACTIVISM, WE BELIEVE THAT OBASANJO AND GARBA SHOULD ON REFLECTION
WELCOME SUCH INTEREST FROM AN INFLUENTIAL FRANCOPHONE BROTHER.

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AS REFTEL RECOGNIZES, THERE IS OF COURSE THE RISK THAT THE
SENEGALESE INITIATIVE MAY TAKE ON THE COMPLEXION OF AN SAG
MANEUVER. IN SUCH A CASE, NIGERIA COULD BE EXPECTED
TO BE AMONG THE FIRST TO CRITICIZE. ON THE OTHER HAND,
STILL SMARTING FROM ITS SECURITY COUNCIL BATTLE WITH AFRICAN
FRANCOPHONES, THE FMG WOULD NOT WISH TO PICK ANOTHER FIGHT
SO SOON. A CLEARLY INDEPENDENT AND OBJECTIVE MOVE BY THE GOS

MIGHT IN FACT BE WELCOMED BY THE FMG AS TAKING SOME OF THE HEAT OFF NIGERIA (WHICH SEES ITS INFLUENCE WITH SWAPO AS BECOMING THREADBARE). AT ANY RATE, RELATIONS BETWEEN NIGERIA AND SENEGAL HAVE IMPROVED TO THE EXTENT THAT THE FMG WOULD ACCEPT A CREDIBLE SENECALESE INITIATIVE AT FACE VALUE OR AT LEAST LOOK THE OTHER WAY AND LET IT RUN ITS COURSE BEFORE MAKING CRITICAL JUDGMENTS.

2. WE RECOGNIZE THAT SENEGAL'S PERIODIC CONTACTS WITH SOUTH AFRICA WILL TEMPT SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO IDENTIFY ANY SENECALESE MISSION AS A SOUTH AFRICAN AND/OR WESTERN EFFORT TO UNDERMINE SWAPO.

SUCH SUSPICIONS WOULD BE ENCOURAGED IF THE MISSION ENTERS NAMIBIA FROM SOUTH AFRICA AS PRESUMABLY IT MUST. PREVIOUS STOPS AND CONSULTATIONS IN FRONTLINE CAPITALS MIGHT REDUCE, BUT NOT ELIMINATE, THIS RISK. A VISIT TO LUANDA FIRST WOULD BE THE STRONGEST PROTECTION BUT WE WONDER WHETHER NETO WOULD ACCEPT. FURTHERMORE, WE ASSUME THE SENECALESE MIGHT FIND IT DISTASTEFUL, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE SHAHA PROBLEM. WOULD BONGO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE AN OAU BLESSING THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL? AT THE VERY LEAST, A FULL REPORT TO THE OAU BY THE SENECALESE MISSION REGARDING ITS FINDINGS MIGHT PROTECT AGAINST THE CHARGE OF "SECRET NEGOTIATIONS" BEHIND SWAPO'S BACK.

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